

**Amendments to the Claims:**

Please amend the claims to read as follows. This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently amended) A system identification module comprising:

a module housing;

a persistent memory for storing system specific data associated with a communications system having a backplane; and

a module connector secured to the module housing and electrically coupled to the persistent memory, the module connector adapted for coupling attachment to and removal from the communications system at the backplane connector, the module connector and the module housing defining an enclosure surrounding the persistent memory, the module connector configured for electrically connecting the persistent memory to the communications system through the backplane connector.

2. (Currently amended) The system identification module of claim 1 wherein the module housing has an outer surface, the outer surface having a ridged portion for grasping the system identification module when the system identification module is coupled to or removed from the backplane connector.

3. (Original) The system identification module of claim 1 further comprising a shelf processor, the shelf processor controlling the programming of the persistent memory and the reading of data from the persistent memory.
4. (Original) The system identification module of claim 1 wherein the persistent memory is a programmable read-only memory device.
5. (Original) The system identification module of claim 4 wherein the programmable read-only memory device is an electrically erasable programmable read-only memory device.
6. (Original) The system identification module of claim 4 wherein the programmable read-only memory device is a 2-pin electrically erasable programmable read-only memory device.
7. (Original) The system identification module of claim 1 wherein the persistent memory comprises a partitioned memory configured to receive data according to predefined data fields.
8. (Original) The system identification module of claim 1 wherein address information, data and power are transmitted to the persistent memory over a single input pin.
9. (Original) The system identification module of claim 1 wherein the module connector comprises a serial connector.
10. (Original) The system identification module of claim 9 wherein the serial connector is an RS-232 connector.
11. (Original) A communications shelf comprising:  
  
a backplane having a backplane connector;

a plurality of communications cards in communication with each other through the backplane; and

a system identification module coupled to the backplane through the backplane connector, the system identification module comprising:

a housing;

a persistent memory for storing system specific data associated with the communications shelf; and

a module connector for coupling to and removal from the backplane connector, the module connector and the housing defining an enclosure surrounding the persistent memory, the module connector electrically connecting the persistent memory to the backplane connector.